

REMARKS

The Examiner has objected to the disclosure based on the use of the term "optimization by annealing" or "simulated annealing" which is incorporated by reference to several of the cited references. Applicants respectfully submit that the term is well understood by one having skill in the relevant art; and herein provide copies of several representative references which employ the term, and the technique, of simulated annealing. Further, Applicants submit herein an amendment to the Specification to insert a well-known description of simulated annealing.

The drawings have been objected to as informal. Applicants will prepare and submit formal drawings in the course of prosecution.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 1-14 and 21 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Garrison in view of Eto; has rejected Claims 15, 17 and 22 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Miseki; has rejected Claims 16 and 18 under 35 USC 103 as unpatentable over Miseki in view of Raman; and, has indicated that Claims 19 and 20 are allowed.

By this amendment, Applicants have canceled Claims 1-2, 6-7, 15-18 and 22. In addition, Applicants have amended independent method Claim 8, independent apparatus Claim 14,

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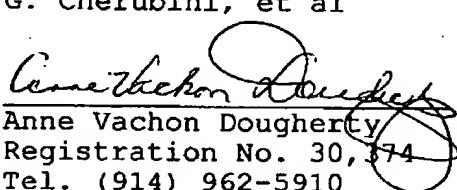
and independent computer program product Claim 21 to include the limitations that have been allowed in method Claims 19 and 20 and in accordance with the Examiner's comments in paragraph 7 of the **Response to Arguments** section. In addition, the dependencies of Claims 3-4 have been changed to depend from allowed Claim 19. Applicants believe that the amendments place all remaining claims in condition for allowance.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments, reconsideration of the amended claim language in light of the remarks, withdrawal of the rejections, and allowance of the claims.

Respectfully submitted,

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